

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

I. Status of the Claims

Claim 3 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter therein.

Claims 1, 4, 5, and 14 are amended without the introduction of new matter.

Claims 1, 2, and 4-18 are pending.

II. Rejections and Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1, 2, 7, 8, and 11-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Johnson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,595,392). Claims 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Johnson in view of the Examiner's statement referring to *Gardner v. TEC Systems, Inc.*, 725 F.2d 1338 (Fed. Cir. 1984). Claim 15 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Johnson in view of Farris et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,131,736).

However, claims 3-5, 14, and 16-18 were indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter. In response, claim 1 is amended to incorporate allowable subject matter of claim 3, and claim 3 is canceled by the present response. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejections of claim 1 and claims 2, and 4-18 dependent therefrom are allowable.

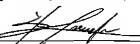
CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below once he has reviewed the amendment if the Examiner believes any issue can be resolved through either a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment.

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Respectfully submitted,

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